

SOUTH BEND



MARCH 2007

Building a 21st Century City
MAYOR STEPHEN J. LUECKE

Letter from the Mayor

Dear Friends & Neighbors,

In early February, I was once again given the privilege of addressing the Common Council and members of our community to talk about the state of our city. The evening took place in the beautifully restored Civic Theater, which served as the perfect backdrop for a discussion about how far we have come in the ten years that I have been Mayor, what we are doing now to strengthen our city and what our vision is for the future of South Bend. Over the next few months, I'd like to share with you some of my thoughts from that evening.

In my first State of the City address, ten years ago, I listed six characteristics that were key to becoming a model city. These characteristics included being financially sound and fiscally responsible, emphasizing public safety, reinvesting in facilities and infrastructure, stimulating growth and development in our economy to provide good jobs, housing and opportunity, enhancing the quality of life, and reaching out to the community to create a shared vision for the future. During a decade of progress, we have built on these principles, laying a strong foundation for the future of our city.

Our work and planning have created an urban center with renewed vibrancy. The city's energy and creativity have led to a revived interest in the advantages of cities and urban life. As Mayor Bart Peterson of Indianapolis keenly noted, this is the "Age of Cities". South Bend is becoming a place where diverse people gather to share ideas, appreciate art and culture, and to find new opportunities. These developing synergies will bring investment, jobs, and a heightened quality of life to South Bend.

But there are challenges that must be faced. Cities across the country are coping with rising costs, declining revenues and requests for more services. Increases in fuel costs, employee health benefits, unfunded mandates, liability coverage, infrastructure and public safety needs, resulted in revenue shortfalls in 70% of Indiana municipalities in 2005. This problem has been compounded by the implementation of a 2% circuit breaker. While this property tax cap will provide needed tax relief for some homeowners, it will also result in a 25% reduction in revenue for local government in this county. Replacement revenues are needed. That is why I have been a strong proponent of Hometown Matters, IACT's proposal to provide property tax relief while also giving options to local governments to supply new revenue streams. I cannot emphasize too strongly how important it is for the Legislature to take action this session to fix the problems that result from this Circuit Breaker.

Public safety is one of our most important obligations and our largest expense. 75% of South Bend property taxes support our Police and Fire Departments. Strong public safety departments are vital to a vibrant city, now more than ever. Cities across the country now face increases in violent crime, vacant properties and a flood of illegal guns. For the first quarter of 2006, South Bend did not have a homicide. Then, the worst happened. In a matter of months we suffered seven murders, including a member of the SBPD. My heart goes out to these victims. Each deserved a better fate. Our Police Department responded, making arrests in each of those cases. Our Metro Homicide Unit is top notch, solving over 90% of

THIS MONTH...

Mayor's Letter
Spring Fling at the Conservatories
2007 Curb & Sidewalk Program
11th Annual Clean Your Files Day



SPRING FLING AT THE CONSERVATORIES

Sunday, April 29th

Enjoy the springtime splendor of the Ella Morris and Muessel-Ellison Botanical Conservatories and Potawatomi Greenhouses, complemented by local musicians, light refreshments, and interactive activities for all ages! (Located on Mishawaka Ave., just west of Ironwood Dr.)

\$3 admission will help preserve the greenhouses & conservatories for the entire community!

Spring Fling at the Conservatories is part of South Bend City Celebration 2007. For more information, please visit SBCityCelebration.com, or call 235-9798 or 235-9951.

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their cases. However, they need even more support. That is why I have joined Mayors Against Illegal Guns, led by Mayor Bloomberg of New York City and Menino of Boston. The flow of weapons into communities all across America is widespread, and it is a travesty. We must keep guns out of the hands of criminals and terrorists. This is a national problem which requires national attention so that our communities will be safer and our cities successful.

A third challenge that compounds the public safety issue is the question of vacant and abandoned properties. An aging housing stock and disproportionate property tax reassessments have dissuaded good landlords who might rehabilitate older properties. This has led to foreclosures, bankruptcies and property tax sales, and ultimately to dangerous and illegal copper and aluminum salvaging from abandoned properties. We are committed to reversing this trend. During the past ten years, the City has invested over \$20 million in housing programs, including first-time homebuyer assistance and rehab loans. And we continue to find and implement programs that work to bring new investors and homeowners to older neighborhoods.

Despite these obstacles, cities are enjoying renewed vigor. Because of the hard work we have been doing in many areas, South Bend is poised for new growth and investment. We are still dedicated to the principles we set down a decade ago, to make South Bend a place of growth, energy and opportunity in this, the Age of Cities.

Sincerely,



Mayor Steve

SOUTH BEND



CURB & SIDEWALK PROGRAM

Mayor Luecke invites you to partner with the City to improve your neighborhood and the entire community! For the 14th year, the Good Neighbors/ Good Neighborhoods Curb and Sidewalk Program will

help to replace damaged curbs and sidewalks and build a Safe City!

The program is open to all residential, commercial, institutional and rental properties within City limits, and several options are available: Sidewalk Only, Curb Only, or Combination Sidewalk & Curb. The City will provide up to 60% of the cost of improvements: up to \$2,000 for mid-block lots, and up to \$4,000 for corner lots, if work is done on both sides. 100% of needed wheelchair accessibility ramps, corner radii and alley approaches will be covered, for work done on your property. Contractors are chosen through the public bid process to ensure the lowest cost, and scheduling priority will be given for more than five (5) adjacent properties in a block participating in the program. Several payment options are available, and Visa and Mastercard are accepted!

Getting your curb and sidewalk replaced is easy!

- Request and submit an application to the Division of Engineering.
- Your application is processed in the order received.
- An inspector comes to your home or business and measures the work to be done.
- The Division of Engineering sends you a Cost Proposal.
- You determine whether the Cost Proposal is acceptable, and notify the Dept. of your decision to proceed.
- Upon receiving your commitment, we send your information to our contractor, who schedules and completes the work.

Applications are available by calling the Division of Engineering at 235-9251, and are accepted year-round. If we are unable to complete your property by the end of the program on October 5, 2007, we will be happy to put you on the list for 2008.

Join the 3,354 property owners who have shared in nearly \$7.2 million worth of improvements since the program began, and help us build a safe, clean and attractive 21st Century City!

Visit Our Website at www.SouthBendIN.gov!

SOUTH BEND



CLEAN YOUR FILES

DAY 2007

The City is once again offering a great opportunity for you to start spring cleaning, by clearing out your files in an environmentally friendly way. Bring your paper to be recycled, by the car load or truck load, to Clean Your Files Day on Wednesday, April 18, 2007, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the College Football Hall of Fame, located in downtown South Bend.

The City of South Bend, Solid Waste Management District of St. Joseph County and Waste Management Inc. invite the entire community, including businesses, non-profit organizations, households, churches, schools and individuals, to help increase the amount of paper that is diverted from landfills by participating in the eleventh annual Clean Your Files Day, a national program of the US Conference of Mayors.

Clean Your Files Day is one of many ways that you can join the City's environmental stewardship efforts. By collecting your yard waste for recycling, you are participating in the Organic Resource Program which composts yard waste into valuable mulch and compost, available free to South Bend residents. By reducing debris and the flow of chemicals into storm drains, you help to ensure a clean river and water supply for our community. And by properly utilizing the City's new automated trash container program, you help to keep our streets, alleys and neighborhoods clean. Thank you for your efforts to build a Clean City!

For more information on Clean Your Files Day, please call Jennifer Jackson, Communications & Special Projects, at 235-7590.